

DISARMAMENT

Facts

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Conventional Weapons:
Efforts to Limit and Reduce Them

United Nations



Preface

The cover reproduces the emblem of the United Nations and the emblem of the World Disarmament Campaign, a global information programme on disarmament and international security launched by the General Assembly in 1982 at its second special session devoted to disarmament. The programme has three primary purposes: to inform, to educate and to generate public understanding of and support for the objectives of the United Nations in the field of arms limitation and disarmament. In order to achieve those goals, the programme is carried out in all regions of the world in a balanced, factual and objective manner.

As part of the programme's activities, the Department for Disarmament Affairs provides information materials on arms limitation and disarmament issues to the non-specialized reader. Such materials cover, in an easily accessible style, issues which may be of particular interest to a broad public. This is one such publication. It is published in the official languages of the United Nations and intended for world-wide dissemination free of charge.

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Conventional Weapons Efforts to Limit and Reduce Them

Introduction

Over the years it has become increasingly apparent that the goal of arms limitation and disarmament needs to be pursued, not only in the field of weapons of mass destruction, but also in that of conventional weapons. The category of weapons of mass destruction, as defined by the United Nations, comprises all nuclear weapons as well as radioactive material weapons, lethal chemical and biological weapons, and any other weapons which might have characteristics comparable in their destructive effects. Conventional weapons have been understood within the United Nations to mean all weapons other than weapons of mass destruction.

The importance of pursuing disarmament with respect to weapons of mass destruction should in no way make us forget, in the words of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, "the need to deal squarely with the mounting toll of death, destruction and human suffering inflicted by the use of conventional weapons in conflicts around the world". It is enough to recall that since 1945 well over 150 million deaths. Moreover, in conventional weapons and that they have caused over 20 million deaths. Moreover, in the course of the past two decades there has been a steady increase in the accuracy and destructive potential of conventional weapons, and ever more sophisticated — and costly — conventional weapons have been transferred into the arsenals of countries

in developing regions. While the militarily significant industrialized States are still the biggest weapon-producing and exporting States, some developing countries are also building their own armaments industries and exporting weapons as well to other developing countries. Today conventional weapons and armed forces account for more than four fifths of global military expenditures, representing a massive consumption of resources for potentially destructive purposes, in stark contrast to the urgent need for social and economic development, for which many of these resources might otherwise be used. These factors have contributed to a willingness on the part of States from all geographical and political groupings to deal with the question of controlling the conventional arms race.

The need to address nuclear and conventional weapons concurrently has increasingly been recognized. By acknowledging at their Geneva summit meeting in 1985 that a nuclear war could not be won and must never be fought, General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan also underlined the importance of preventing any war between them, whether nuclear or conventional. With the improvement in the international climate, progress in several areas of arms limitation and disarmament both between the USSR and the United States and between the members of the two major alliances has been achieved, particularly since the second half of the 1980s.

The conclusion of the INF Treaty between the Soviet Union and the United States (on the elimination of their intermediate- and shorter-range nuclear missiles), the prospects of further reductions in their nuclear arsenals (START agreement), and the

signing of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe at the summit of the States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in November 1990 have increased the hopes of the international community for meaningful arms limitation and disarmament.

At the United Nations, discussion of the issue of conventional disarmament has focused on four aspects, namely: (a) conventional weapons *per se* and efforts to limit and reduce them; (b) international arms transfers; (c) the regional approach; and (d) the 1980 Convention on inhumane weapons. (For the last-mentioned, see Disarmament Facts 71.)

Conventional weapons per se and efforts to limit and reduce them

Member States of the United Nations have always agreed in principle that arms limitation and disarmament should apply not only to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, but also to conventional weapons. Thus, after adopting a resolution dealing with the new security problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy and its application for military purposes — the very first resolution it adopted (resolution 1 (I) of 24 January 1946) — the General Assembly later that year adopted another resolution to address the question of achieving an early general regulation and reduction of all conventional armaments and armed forces (resolution 41 (I) of 14 December 1946).

Again in 1952, when the General Assembly established the Disarmament Commission, it directed the Commission to develop plans for the regulation, limitation and balanced reduction of all armed forces and all armaments, and for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

At the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978, a Final Document setting out an international disarmament strategy was unanimously adopted. The Document recognized the need to have, together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, negotiations on the balanced reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments, based on the principle of undiminished security of the parties with a view to promoting or enhancing stability at a lower military level, taking into account the need of all States to protect their security (para. 22). While stressing that "effective measures of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war have the highest priority" (para. 20), Member States further agreed that priorities in disarmament negotiations would be: "nuclear weapons; other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons; conventional weapons, including any which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects; and reduction of armed forces" (para. 45) and that "nothing should preclude States from conducting negotiations on all priority items concurrently" (para. 46). Moreover, the Document stated: "Together with negotiations on nuclear disarmament measures, the limitation and gradual reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons should be resolutely pursued within the framework of progress towards general and complete

disarmament. States with the largest military arsenals have a special responsibility in pursuing the process of conventional armaments reductions" (para. 81).

However, in spite of those agreements in principle, the deliberations by the United Nations on disarmament before the mid-1980s focused mainly on nuclear disarmament, and only a limited number of Member States consistently supported measures towards conventional disarmament. In the meantime, the quantitative and qualitative advance in the development, production, use and transfer of conventional weapons continued unabated.

In 1981, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to establish an expert group to carry out a study on conventional disarmament. The study was completed in 1984. It helped to identify practical approaches and realistic measures that could lead to the limitation and reduction of conventional weapons and armed forces. The study stressed that reductions in military *matériel* in all areas of the world where there were major concentrations of forces and armaments could offer substantial benefits, as would reductions in personnel, to be achieved through agreed ceilings, through reductions in overall personnel figures or by the disbanding of a number of military units. Reductions and restrictions on military deployments were only a partial and preliminary measure, but they could contribute significantly to confidence-building and to conventional disarmament efforts. Restrictions on forces perceived to be particularly threatening or agreements on limits on the types and numbers of armed force components to be deployed in specified areas could be especially valuable. The

study further suggested that particular attention should be given to armed forces deployed in foreign territories.

Other areas which the study believed could be considered were: restraint on militarily relevant research, development and testing; agreements on reductions of international arms transfers; confidence-building measures; and the promotion of an enlightened and determined commitment by the public in all countries to the achievement of effective measures of disarmament. In the context of public information, the United Nations was to provide accurate information on the armaments race and disarmament, to promote a sound understanding of the issues involved and of the different points of view, and to make the public aware of the approaches and measures by which conventional disarmament might be achieved.

The study suggested that, depending on the circumstances, deliberations and negotiations could take place in connection with or outside the United Nations; actions might be taken unilaterally, bilaterally, regionally or multilaterally, between individual States or groups of States. In view of their significant roles in world affairs, action by the Governments of the Soviet Union and the United States to improve their mutual relationship would facilitate practical steps of conventional arms limitation and disarmament, not only between themselves and their allies, but also to some extent in other regions of the world.

While some States had a special responsibility, the study declared that there was an urgent need for all States to explore what each one of them might be able to do in

the way of initiating or facilitating efforts aimed at conventional arms limitation and disarmament. In addition to negotiations, parallel actions by mutual example and/or unilateral initiatives might be impulses towards progress in disarmament efforts and should be considered where conditions permitted.

Consideration by the United Nations of the question of conventional disarmament, especially in recent years, has revealed an increased awareness among Member States that, without diverting priority efforts from nuclear matters, concern about the continuing arms race in conventional weapons is justified. There seems to be a growing recognition in the international community of the need for significant reductions in conventional armaments and armed forces in various parts of the world, taking into account the specific characteristics of each region, as essential elements of the disarmament process. Member States are now more aware of the fact that international peace and security cannot be achieved unless the question of the qualitative development, production and use, as well as transfer, of conventional weapons is also addressed.

Following the completion of the United Nations expert study on conventional disarmament, the General Assembly has, since 1985, included in its agenda an item entitled "Conventional disarmament". In 1986, the Assembly requested the Disarmament Commission to consider that question on the basis of the 1984 study, a task which it completed at its substantive session in 1990.

For a number of years the General Assembly has adopted further resolutions on the subject, addressing, *inter alia*, the issue of conventional disarmament on a regional scale. It has also urged the countries with the largest military arsenals and members of the two major military alliances to continue their negotiations on conventional armaments with a view to reaching agreement on the establishment of a stable and secure balance at lower levels under effective international control.

At the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1988, the debate on conventional disarmament was extensive. It touched upon such questions as the spread of ever more sophisticated conventional weapons throughout the world; the tragic losses of life and property in conventional warfare since the end of the Second World War; the increasing threat posed by conventional forces and weapons world-wide; the tendency to underestimate the danger of conventional arms proliferation and use by focusing on the threat posed by nuclear war; the expanding arms trade and international transfer in conventional weapons; the rising level of armaments and the persistence of conventional wars in developing countries; the need for phased conventional disarmament on the basis of the concept of sufficiency, in regional and subregional areas; and the problems created by new technologies as applied to conventional weapons. The debate made clear that if the international community wanted to curb the arms race, it must in the future — much more than it had done in the past — place greater emphasis on conventional weapons at global, regional and subregional levels. A number of working papers were submitted

from various sides, with a view to expanding the area of consensus on the subject.

The debate at both the 1989 and 1990 sessions of the General Assembly and the 1990 session of the Disarmament Commission clearly reflected the changes in the international climate brought about by the accelerating pace of events in Europe and by the results achieved in the negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures and on conventional arms reduction. Hope was expressed that the European experience might inspire change in other regions as well. The broad objectives of arms limitation and disarmament, it was generally felt, now appeared practicable and achievable, but tangible progress towards them was necessary to lend permanence to the change. In May 1990, the Disarmament Commission adopted by consensus recommendations on conventional disarmament, which are reproduced in the annex.

International arms transfers

At the United Nations the question of the arms trade and, in general, international arms transfers presented from the very beginning numerous problems for which there were no easy solutions. In fact, the General Assembly was unable to adopt any resolution on the subject until 1988, exactly twenty years after the first attempt had been made to give the United Nations a role in restraining arms transfers between States, whether by trade or otherwise.

In the discussions, several Western countries point to the transfer of arms and, in particular, their importation as a main cause of the conventional arms race.

On the other hand, a large number of Members, mostly developing countries, treat the question of transfers in conjunction with that of arms production, and most of them hold that the ever-increasing qualitative and quantitative arms traffic is promoted by the producers and suppliers in order to maximize their commercial and foreign policy advantages. In calling for the simultaneous regulation of the production and transfer of conventional weapons, many emphasize that the industrialized countries' development and production of increasingly sophisticated and destructive types of such weapons tend in some cases to blur the difference between nuclear and conventional arms and thus to add a new and dangerous dimension to the already disconcerting overall situation in the armaments field. Although they recognize that a special responsibility rests with the suppliers, some supplier States, in particular the United Kingdom and the United States, stress the ineffectiveness of the unilateral approach by suppliers to curbing arms transfers.

A number of concrete suggestions aimed at curbing the international transfer of arms have been made, including (a) the prevention of all forms of illegal trade in arms; (b) international registration of arms sales and transfers; and (c) an expert study as a first step towards examining the conventional arms race and the growth of international arms transfers.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the regional approach to the regulation and reduction of arms transfers received increasing attention. In general, the concept was supported by countries with different geographical, political and socio-economic backgrounds.

Regional measures were seen as important supplements to other approaches, including bilateral and global initiatives. It was frequently stressed that conventional arms restraint was vital for both economic and security reasons, especially for developing and small and medium-sized countries, for the following reasons: the conventional arms race accounted for the largest portion of military expenditures; conventional weapons were being used in conflicts; conventional weapons were becoming increasingly lethal; and dual-purpose technology was being developed.

At the bilateral level, the USSR and the United States were engaged in talks on the limitation of conventional arms transfers in the late 1970s. However, they were unable to reach concrete agreement and the talks were suspended.

At the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1988, a number of Member States focused on the question of arms transfers. Addressing that issue, the Secretary-General of the United Nations said that the innocuous-sounding phrase "arms transfers" should not make one forget the devastating effect of the supply of weapons in local conflicts. He then added: "To my mind, the fact that the arms component is a growing factor in the export figures of many countries, including developing countries, is a very sad commentary on the present state of affairs. With modern technology, not only nuclear war but, increasingly, conventional war as well, has acquired a dimension of destructiveness that it did not have in any earlier age. It is therefore necessary to restrict the spread of the most dangerous types of conventional weapons and, ultimately, to eliminate them altogether." One of the

imperatives flowing from this, the Secretary-General stressed, was that there must be a greater awareness on the part of the international community of the incalculable dangers of the conventional arms race and of arms transfers.

Later in 1988, the General Assembly was finally able to adopt a substantive resolution on the subject (resolution 43/75 I), by which it expressed its conviction that arms transfers in all their aspects deserved serious consideration by the international community, *inter alia*, because of: (a) their potential effects in areas where tension and regional conflict threatened international peace and security and national security; (b) their known and potential negative effects on the process of the peaceful social and economic development of all peoples; and (c) increasing illicit and covert arms trafficking. It requested Member States to consider such measures as: reinforcement of their national systems of control and vigilance concerning production and transport of arms; examination of ways and means of refraining from acquiring arms additional to those needed for legitimate national security requirements, taking into account the specific characteristics of each region; and examination of the ways and means of providing for more openness and transparency with regard to world-wide arms transfers. By the same resolution, the Secretary-General was requested to carry out, with the assistance of governmental experts, a study on ways and means of promoting transparency in international transfers on a universal and non-discriminatory basis, taking into consideration the views of Member States as well as other relevant

information, including that on the problem of illicit arms trade. The study report of the group of experts will be submitted to the General Assembly in 1991.

Generally speaking, resolution 43/75 I provides a significant indication of the international community's more positive approach to the question of international arms transfers. Indeed, it marks a turning-point in the multilateral approach to the issue. Although the perspectives of States on possible solutions are still different, as they reflect different national security perceptions and requirements, the way should now be open for the United Nations to develop a consensus on multilateral action with a view to restraining international arms transfers. This is especially important at this juncture, now that an East-West agreement on reductions of conventional arms has been reached (November 1990, see below). All efforts should be made to ensure that weapons earmarked for destruction do not find their way into the international arms market.

The regional approach

While stressing the need for harmony between regional efforts and global programmes and priorities, the 1981 United Nations study on all aspects of regional disarmament noted that the inclusion of a regional aspect in the approach to disarmament is of particular importance as regards the cessation of the conventional arms race. It stated that the ubiquity of conventional weapons and armed forces, their technical and functional diversity and the central role of conventional forces in the security

perceptions of countries of a region make the question of conventional disarmament highly complex and the possible approaches highly dependent on regional conditions.

As has been noted, the urgency of regional disarmament stems both from the importance of enhancing security in the different regions of the world and from the impetus which the adoption of measures in one region can give to efforts in other regions or globally. Effective measures of disarmament are particularly needed in those regions where there is a large accumulation of weapons and/or where situations persist which might endanger peace and security.

The regional approach to disarmament is by no means new. Several important initiatives since the Second World War have been regional in scope; a good number have been taken in the nuclear field. It is enough to refer in this connection to proposals and agreements relating to nuclear-weapon-free zones, such as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, or to nuclear-free zones, such as the Treaty of Rarotonga, and to zones of peace. Others cover both nuclear and conventional weapons. This is the case, for instance, of the Antarctic Treaty, an international agreement providing for the complete demilitarization of a sizeable geographical region. Still others may focus exclusively on conventional weapons.

Measures of disarmament can, of course, be taken unilaterally, either as an end in themselves or as a means of creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence and, in general, promoting bilateral or multilateral negotiations on disarmament. A number of such steps have been taken in the past years. Europe, for

example, is the region most affected by unilateral measures of arms reduction. In December 1988, General Secretary Gorbachev underscored in the General Assembly the need to turn from the principle of overarmament to the principle of reasonable defensive sufficiency. Specifically, he announced plans for the reduction of the Soviet armed forces by 500,000 men within the next two years and that by 1991, 50,000 Soviet troops would be withdrawn from Eastern Europe. The total reduction in the European part of the USSR and in the territory of its allies would comprise 10,000 tanks, 8,500 artillery systems and 800 combat aircraft. Early in 1989 other member States of the Warsaw Treaty also announced unilateral reductions in their armaments.

Against the backdrop of dramatic developments in Eastern European countries later in 1989 and in 1990, additional reductions were announced and implemented. Agreements were reached between Hungary and the Soviet Union as well as between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union regarding the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops from the territories of those States. By a treaty signed in October 1990 between Germany and the Soviet Union, Soviet troops stationed on the territory of the former German Democratic Republic would be completely withdrawn by 1994.

Europe has been the focus of considerable multilateral effort as well. Throughout 1988, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) worked to establish a new forum for negotiations to supersede the unsuccessful Talks on Mutual Reduction of Forces and Armaments and Associated Measures in Central Europe, which had been conducted since 1973.

The new forum, the "Negotiation on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe" (CFE), in which 16 member States of NATO and initially 7 member States of the WTO participated, opened in March 1989 in Vienna. The negotiations were established within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. In the new, more promising political atmosphere, these negotiations became the main focus of attention in the field of conventional disarmament, both in a general sense and as a regional initiative of crucial importance, involving the world's most heavily armed continent.

During the negotiation period several of the premises under which the participants entered the negotiations changed significantly, requiring considerable flexibility by negotiators. Finally, the 22 member States of the two military alliances agreed on a text for limiting conventional armaments in Europe. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe was signed by the 22 States at the summit meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe held in Paris in November 1990. At that meeting, an additional set of confidence- and security-building measures (CSBMs), complementing those agreed on in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 and the Stockholm Document of 1986, was also adopted by the 34 participating States, together with a "Charter of Paris for a New Europe". The adoption of those documents is a tremendous achievement in that it contributes to strengthening stability and security in Europe through, *inter alia*, a stable and secure balance of conventional weapons at lower

levels, and an increase in the level of confidence and trust among the States participating in the CSCE process.

Outside Europe, efforts to reduce tension and lower the level of armed forces are being undertaken as well, particularly in Central America. In 1987, at the talks held among Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, the President of Costa Rica suggested that the five Central American States begin "negotiations for the control and reduction of current stocks of weapons and on the number of troops under arms". Such negotiations should also cover measures for the disarming of irregular forces operating in the region. Negotiations have continued, and in July 1990 the Security Commission, set up by the five Central American Presidents, agreed upon a series of objectives, among them, that the armed forces in the region be of a defensive character, that they be balanced so as not to pose a threat to neighbouring States, and that a mechanism for verification and control be established. At a further meeting, in November 1990, the Commission agreed in principle on elements for the establishment of a reasonable, proportionate balance of forces in the region, and approved the proposal of its Technical Sub-Commission for a model to monitor the levels and inventories of military installations, equipment and armaments in Central America.

Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces In Europe (CFE Treaty)

The CFE Treaty and its various protocols are of historic importance. Seeking to establish a stable and secure balance of conventional forces at lower levels, to eliminate disparities in forces and the capability to launch a surprise attack and large-scale offensive operations, the Treaty has been hailed as the most ambitious arms- and force-limitation agreement ever concluded.

The CFE Treaty puts equal ceilings and sub-ceilings for the two sides on tanks, armoured combat vehicles, artillery, combat aircraft and attack helicopters, requiring verified destruction of excess equipment during a three-year period (or, in a few cases, conversion for civilian purposes). It also sets up an elaborate system of verification, including data exchange, on-site inspection, challenge inspection and on-site monitoring of the destruction of military equipment to be reduced. The sub-ceilings set limits on the quantity of different kinds of military ground equipment permitted within major categories (for instance armoured personnel carriers, armoured infantry fighting vehicles), and on how much of it may be stationed in each of four sub-zones of the area from the Atlantic to the Urals. Another agreed sub-ceiling, referred to as the "sufficiency rule", sets a limit on the proportion of the total permitted to each side that can be held by any single country (about one third).

The following restrictions/limitations have been agreed upon:

Treaty-limited items	per side	Ceilings in any one country
Tanks	20 000	13 300
Armoured combat vehicles	30 000	20 000
Artillery	20 000	13 700
Combat aircraft	6 800	5 150
Attack helicopters	2 000	1 500

The CFE Treaty also commits its parties to follow-on negotiations, with the same basic mandate, in which they are expected to seek agreement on, among other things, manpower levels. The parties also agreed not to increase existing levels during the new round of negotiations.

While most of the difficult questions concerning definitions were resolved in agreed language within the Treaty, the question of land-based naval aircraft was resolved by a commitment outside the Treaty to limit them to 430 on each side.

On the occasion of the signing of the CFE Treaty, the parties to the Treaty issued a joint declaration:

1. The signatories solemnly declare that, in the new era of European relations which is beginning, they are no longer adversaries, will build new partnerships and extend to each other the hand of friendship.
2. They recall their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and reaffirm all of their commitments under the Helsinki Final Act. They stress that all of the ten Helsinki Principles are of primary significance and that, accordingly, they will be equally and unreservedly applied, each of them being interpreted taking into account the others. In that context, they affirm their obligation and commitment to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or the political independence of any State, from seeking to change existing borders by threat or use of force, and from acting in any other manner inconsistent with the principles and purposes of those documents. None of their weapons will ever be used except in self-defence or otherwise in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.
3. They recognize that security is indivisible and that the security of each of their countries is inextricably linked to the security of all the States participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.
4. They undertake to maintain only such military capabilities as are necessary to

prevent war and provide for effective defence. They will bear in mind the relationship between military capabilities and doctrines.

5. They reaffirm that every State has the right to be or not to be a party to a treaty of alliance.
6. They note with approval the intensification of political and military contacts among them to promote mutual understanding and confidence. They welcome in this context the positive responses made to recent proposals for new regular diplomatic liaison.
7. They declare their determination to contribute actively to conventional, nuclear and chemical arms control and disarmament agreements which enhance security and stability for all. In particular, they call for the early entry into force of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and commit themselves to continue the process of strengthening peace in Europe through conventional arms control within the framework of the CSCE. They welcome the prospect of new negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on the reduction of their short-range nuclear forces.
8. They welcome the contribution that confidence- and security-building measures have made to lessening tensions and fully support the further development of such measures. They reaffirm the importance of the Open Skies initiative and their determination to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion as soon as possible.

9. They pledge to work together with the other CSCE participating States to strengthen the CSCE process so that it can make an even greater contribution to security and stability in Europe. They recognize in particular the need to enhance political consultations among CSCE participants and to develop other CSCE mechanisms. They are convinced that the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and agreement on a substantial new set of CSBMs, together with new patterns of co-operation in the framework of the CSCE, will lead to increased security and thus to enduring peace and stability in Europe.

10. They believe that the preceding points reflect the deep longing of their peoples for close co-operation and mutual understanding and declare that they will work steadily for the further development of their relations in accordance with the present Declaration as well as with the principles set forth in the Helsinki Final Act.

The Vienna Document of 1990 on Confidence- and Security-building Measures and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe

The Vienna Document of 1990 integrates a set of substantially new confidence- and security-building measures with measures adopted in the Stockholm Document of 1986 in a way that further develops those provisions in the light of the experience gained.

The main text of the Vienna Document deals with annual exchanges of information in an agreed format on the command-organization and deployment of military forces and weapon systems, on plans for future deployment, and on military budgets giving itemized defence expenditures on the basis of the categories set out in the United Nations instrument for standardized international reporting on military expenditures.

In a section on risk reduction, the Document of 1990 specifies mechanisms for consultation and co-operation regarding unusual military activities and hazardous military incidents. It also delineates procedures for military contacts and visits to air bases, and extends the arrangements made earlier regarding prior notification of certain military activities and regarding verification of compliance, including inspection on request. It provides for a network of direct communications between the capitals of the participating States and for annual implementation-assessment meetings.

In adopting the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the 34 signatories pledge their common efforts to consolidate respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law and to strengthen peace and promote unity in Europe. To achieve those goals, a new quality of political dialogue and co-operation and the development of new structures in the CSCE are necessary. To this end the parties decided to establish various mechanisms, such as regular meetings of the heads of State or Government of the CSCE participants, regular meetings of the Council of CSCE Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the setting up of a CSCE Secretariat in Prague as well as of a Conflict Prevention Centre in Vienna. An office for Free Elections will be established in Warsaw.

Conclusion

The trend beginning in the mid-1980s towards increasing emphasis on the conventional aspect of the arms race is encouraging. In view of the very large number of armed conflicts since the end of the Second World War, it is important that negotiations for limitation and gradual reduction of armed forces and conventional weapons should be resolutely pursued.

The new co-operative spirit which has been highlighted by the conclusion of important agreements may open vast possibilities for further progress in the field of conventional arms limitation and disarmament, both in Europe and beyond. It may also encourage change in political, social and economic fields.

The accumulation and increasing sophistication of conventional arms occur world-wide, with different implications for various regions. There is an urgent need for the international community to explore what can be done to promote conventional arms limitation and disarmament and restraint in international arms transfers. The problem of curbing the conventional arms race and transfers of weapons is not only regional: it is an integral part of the global problem of security.

Annex

At its 1990 session, the Disarmament Commission continued its consideration of issues related to conventional disarmament with a view to facilitating possible measures in the field of conventional arms reduction and disarmament as well as on the issue of international arms transfers. At the end of the session, the following text was adopted by consensus:

1. The Working Group recalled the priorities in disarmament established by the General Assembly in the Final Document of its Tenth Special Session, the first special session devoted to disarmament, as stated in paragraph 45, namely: nuclear weapons; other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons; conventional weapons, including any which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects; and reduction of armed forces. As stated in paragraph 46 of the Final Document, nothing should preclude States from conducting negotiations on all priority items concurrently. The Group took into account the principles derived from the Final Document which provided the perspective on and addressed the subjects of the conventional arms race and conventional disarmament as identified in paragraph 8 of the Study on Conventional Disarmament (A/39/348).
2. In dealing with the subject-matter before it in the context established in paragraph 1 above, the Group recalled that since the Second World War there has been a large number of armed conflicts fought with conventional weapons. It was noted that certain conflicts continue and pose a threat to regional and global peace and security. The Group, however, took account of the recent

overall amelioration in the international situation and the trend towards the peaceful settlement of various regional conflicts, the important role played in that regard by the United Nations and the possible positive implications of these developments for efforts related to disarmament.

3. Attention was given to recent developments in relation to Europe, which has the highest concentration of arms and armed forces. The successful conclusion in January 1989 of the CSCE Follow-up Meeting in Vienna led to further negotiations in the field of confidence- and security-building measures as well as the new Negotiation on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, both within the framework of the CSCE process. The Group, recalling General Assembly resolutions 41/86 L, 43/75 P and 44/116 I, welcomed the progress made and considered that positive results in these negotiations would serve to improve security and develop co-operation in Europe, thereby contributing to international peace and security in the world as a whole.
4. Attention was also given to the agreement in 1987 between Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador on a procedure for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America and subsequent declarations and agreements, which include important steps towards disarmament. The Group welcomed these declarations and agreements, which would serve to promote security and develop co-operation in the region. They constitute an important contribution to international peace and security.
5. The Group identified a number of issues and possible measures in the field of conventional arms reductions and disarmament, which are set out below.

6. The accumulation and increasing sophistication of conventional arms in various regions of the world, particularly by those States with the largest military arsenals, have grave implications for international peace and security. Agreements or other measures in the field of conventional disarmament therefore should be resolutely pursued on a bilateral, regional and multilateral basis, due account being taken of paragraph 83 of the Final Document. Whereas States with the largest military arsenals have a special responsibility in pursuing the process of conventional disarmament, it is incumbent upon all States, while taking into account the need to protect their security and maintain necessary defensive capabilities, to intensify their efforts and take, either on their own or by agreement, appropriate steps in the field of conventional disarmament that would enhance peace and security in their regions as well as globally and contribute to overall progress towards the goal of general and complete disarmament.
7. The limitation and reduction of conventional arms and armed forces could relate to weapons and manpower, and include their deployment. The objective of conventional disarmament measures should be undiminished or increased security at the lowest possible level of armaments and military forces. Weapons and equipment which are the subject of conventional forces reductions agreements should not be transferred, directly or indirectly, to States not party to the agreement in question. The principal method of dealing with such reductions should be destruction.
8. The States members of two major military alliances have made progress towards an early agreement on substantial reduction of their conventional armed forces in Europe;

they are urged to continue their intensive efforts to this end in order to fulfil the mandate of their negotiations, which is to achieve increased security at lower levels of forces and to eliminate the capability for surprise attack and large-scale offensive action.

9. In relation to negotiations on conventional disarmament, conscious of paragraph 83 of the Final Document of SSOD I, States should take into account a number of factors, such as: circumstances prevailing in a particular region; the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the forces which are the subject of negotiations; the importance of a basis of comparable data; asymmetries that might exist among various countries as a result of historical, geographical and other factors; the need to eliminate military asymmetries which are prejudicial to security; the need of States to protect their security, bearing in mind the inherent right of self-defence and the right of peoples to self-determination and independence; the various significant implications of military strategies; the need to take steps to eliminate the capability for surprise attack and offensive action; and the implications of arms transfers.
10. Although negotiations should be undertaken to facilitate and achieve substantial disarmament, and ultimately general and complete disarmament, unilateral measures could be taken in order to enhance regional and global peace and security.
11. Taking into consideration the progress accomplished in the field of conventional disarmament, the important role of efforts at disarmament on a regional scale must be recognized. The regional approach to disarmament is one of the essential elements in global efforts. Regional disarmament measures should be taken at the initiative and with the participation of

States concerned and must take into account the specific characteristics of each region. In regions where tensions may be high and a potential for conflict may exist, measures aimed at reducing tensions could lead to reductions and restrictions on military deployments by all States concerned and thus contribute to strengthening confidence and international peace and security.

12. Although confidence-building measures, whether military or non-military, cannot serve as a substitute for concrete disarmament measures, they can play an important role in facilitating progress towards disarmament in that they alleviate mistrust and thus enhance international co-operation and security, whether they are taken unilaterally, bilaterally or multilaterally. Consequently, the value of such measures was emphasized, it being understood that they should always be so designed as to take into account the specific situation in and characteristics of the region in question.

13. Conventional disarmament agreements must provide for adequate and effective measures for their verification satisfactory to all parties concerned in order to create the necessary confidence and to ensure that the agreements are being observed. The Group noted that the Secretary-General, upon the request of the General Assembly and with the assistance of a group of qualified governmental experts, is undertaking an in-depth study of the role of the United Nations in the field of verification.

14. As appropriate, negotiations on measures of conventional disarmament should also cover such types of conventional weapons as encompass radically new techniques arising from qualitative technological advances.

15. The global expenditure on arms and armed forces, by far the largest part of which is attributable to conventional arms and armed forces, represents a massive consumption of resources for potentially destructive purposes in a stark contrast to the urgent need for social and economic development and for increased international co-operation in those fields. Reduction in military expenditure by releasing resources could, therefore, entail benefits both in the social and economic fields as well as in the political field.
16. Arms transfers can have serious implications for conventional disarmament, as recalled in the Final Document. Arms transfers should be addressed in conjunction with the questions of maintaining international peace and security, reducing international tension, enhancing confidence, and promoting disarmament as well as social and economic development. Restraint and greater openness can help in this respect and contribute to the promotion of international peace and security. In this context, the grave consequences of illicit traffic in arms deserve substantive consideration. The Group noted that the Secretary-General, upon the request of the General Assembly and with the assistance of a group of qualified governmental experts, is undertaking an in-depth study of ways and means of promoting transparency in international transfers of conventional arms on a universal and non-discriminatory basis.
17. Taking into account the priorities in disarmament set out in the Final Document, the subject of conventional disarmament should continue to be actively pursued in the United Nations as one significant contribution to the endeavours of the international community towards general and complete disarmament under effective international control. In addition to

deliberations by the Disarmament Commission on how to facilitate the process of conventional disarmament, it would be welcome if the Conference on Disarmament were to address the issue of conventional disarmament when practicable. The United Nations should be kept duly informed of developments in disarmament efforts outside its aegis, without prejudice to the progress of negotiations.

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75

